

On a Sunday morning, the 15th of July, what was to turn out to be the wettest summer season ever known in the Shortgrass Country was launched. I was up before daylight, building a fire to barbeque a kid goat, when far-off thunder began to rumble in a dark cloud bank west of the ranch and wisps of showers passed over, pausing long enough to make the coals sputter under the grill.

From that morning to the present, all stations in this area have had rains and plenty of them. Mud clods dropping off the pickup frames in front of the Post Office and coffee house were no more than hitting the asphalt before a downpour would come and dissolve them away.

Something else unusual was that the rain seemed to be falling around the gauges for the first time. I didn't hear one herder report that he thought he might have had more rain a half-mile down the road from his east mill than his gauge showed.

I didn't think we'd ever have so much rain out here that the gaugers and the gauges would agree, especially by the time the sole witness to the reading had had time to think about the matter on his way to town.

I remember when the transition was made in the 1930s from tomato cans and fruit jars to the more sophisticated tubes of today to measure rainfall. However, though the devices have changed, many of the same hombres are gathering the reports.

Maybe now that we aren't measuring rain in such fractional amounts, we'll develop into a more credible breed of weathermen. John D. Rockefeller said that after he started thinking in millions it was easy as easy as thinking in dollar bills.